



Ensuring the Success of Idaho Agriculture

Idaho's past, present, and future are tied to agriculture. Generations of farmers and ranchers have helped to shape our culture, and agriculture continues to be one of the largest sectors of our state's economy. As your representative in Congress, I have a strong responsibility to ensure that Idaho's agriculture sector can continue to thrive in the future.

We depend on agriculture to feed and clothe our nation and to help meet the needs of many around the world. In order to do so, farmers and ranchers are continually working to ensure that their operations are sustainable and efficient. A wide variety of issues, including transportation, trade agreements, taxes, energy, and environmental issues, directly impact the cost of production, and I believe that Congress should carefully consider the impact of legislation on our farmers and ranchers, working to ensure that they have the tools they need to succeed. As a member of the House Potato Caucus, the House Sugar Caucus, and the Congressional Dairy Caucus, I will continue to look out for the interests of Idaho agriculture

Trade:

I strongly believe that Idaho's farmers and businesses can compete and win on a level playing field. Unfortunately, a number of recent trade agreements have had a negative impact on our agriculture industry and contributed to tough economic times for the rural areas of our nation. Because of this, I have become increasingly skeptical of the merits of certain trade agreements.

As one of the Co-Chairs of the Congressional Trade Caucus for Farmers and Ranchers, I will continue to closely scrutinize new trade agreements and push for stronger enforcement of existing trade agreements. I will vote against any trade agreement that I believe puts Idaho's economy in jeopardy and puts Idaho workers, farmers, and ranchers out of business.

2008 Farm Bill:

I supported the Food and Energy Security Act of 2008. I believe the 2008 Farm Bill provided the secure framework Idaho farmers need to plan for the future. The tested and proven safety net established in the 2002 Farm Bill was essentially maintained with minor changes. Some of the provisions I feel are particularly beneficial for Idaho producers include:

- The continuation of the price based counter-cyclical program, which provides assistance only when crop prices decline to a predetermined point.
- A new optional revenue-based counter-cyclical program, the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE). ACRE is a state-based revenue guarantee for participants. This program will provide producers with payments for a commodity when the actual state revenue for the commodity is less than the revenue guarantee.

- Significant investment in the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, which will include important Idaho agricultural products such as potatoes, apples, grapes, onions, mint, cherries, many varieties of berries, and nursery and ornamental crops.
- Extension and increase of important conservation programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Conservation Security Program (CSP).
- Finally, this Farm Bill establishes an important disaster fund to be utilized in instances of drought, flood, or other weather related set backs. This will hopefully provide greater security to producers and will prevent Congress from scrambling to provide relief following natural disasters.

Food Safety:

The U.S. food supply is among the safest in the world. However, like many Idahoans, I am deeply concerned by recent outbreaks of salmonella and other food borne illnesses linked to foods produced in or exported to the United States. Some critics claim that significant gaps within the federal food safety regulation system and lack of enforcement of regulations on imported foods have contributed to these recent food safety problems.

The 2008 Farm Bill included a number of food safety provisions intended to address the gaps in our food safety systems. I strongly supported these efforts. I am concerned, however, about proposals that would increase the regulatory burden on agriculture without seeing measurable improvements in food safety. For example, I believe that agriculture should be regulated by the Department of Agriculture, not by the Food and Drug Administration, and I am concerned that efforts to duplicate regulation are over-reaching. Such efforts only broaden the size and scope of government, raising new taxes on small businesses and intruding in the private lives of Americans while doing little to actually improve food safety. I will continue to support responsible efforts to ensure that our food supply is as safe as possible.

Tax Relief:

The estate tax hits farm families especially hard, and I have consistently supported efforts to permanently repeal or reduce the impact of this burdensome tax. Throughout their lives, people pay sales tax, property tax, and income tax on their assets. Paying Uncle Sam *again* should not be part of the grieving process. The death tax accounts for less than one percent of the federal budget, but almost one-third of business owners are forced to sell their businesses or liquidate a portion of their assets to pay death taxes. Far from benefiting only the richest citizens, the repeal of the death tax assists people such as farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and grandparents who have worked their whole lives to pass something on to their children.

I am a cosponsor of legislation that would increase the estate tax exemption to \$5 million per person and reduce the top rate to 35% in equal increments over ten years, maintaining the stepped up basis and indexing the tax for inflation. This legislation will ensure that the vast majority of this country's farms and ranches will not be threatened by the estate tax. I am also a cosponsor of the Family Farm Preservation and Conservation Estate Tax Act, which provides an estate tax exclusion for farms and ranches as long as family farmland use continues.